840 Lorimer Street Rezoning
Community District 1, Brooklyn
March 9, 2021

1. Introduction

Zucker Enterprises, LLC, (the "Applicant") proposes a zoning map amendment and zoning text amendment on Block 2679, Lots 32, 34, 42, and 43 (the" Project Area") located in the Greenpoint-Williamsburg neighborhood within Brooklyn Community District 1.

The Applicant seeks approval of a zoning map amendment to change the Project Area from a M1-2/R6 (MX-8) and R6A/C2-4 zoning districts to a C4-5D zoning district and a text amendment to the Zoning Resolution ("ZR") Appendix F: Inclusionary Housing Designated Areas and Mandatory Inclusionary Housing ("MIH") Areas to designate the Project Area a MIH Area in which MIH Options 1 and 2 are applicable.

The proposed actions would facilitate the redevelopment of 840 Lorimer Street (Block 2679, Lot 43) (the "Development Site"). The proposed development is a new 10-story plus cellar mixed-use building containing approximately 83,748 square feet of zoning floor area with a Floor Area Ratio ("FAR") of 5.54 (the "Proposed Development"). The Proposed Development will be a residential and commercial building with retail and commercial office uses and 74 dwelling units including 19 dwelling units designated permanently affordable in accordance with MIH Option 1.

2. Background

The Project Area is located at the southern edge of the Greenpoint neighborhood, just north of McCarren Park. In 2005, the City Council approved the Department of City Planning's ("DCP") Greenpoint-Williamsburg Rezoning application (N 050110(A) ZRK) which rezoned most of the Proposed Development Site to an MX-8 Special Mixed Use district in order to permit mixed-use light industrial/commercial and residential uses. The easternmost portion of the district was most recently rezoned from R6 to R6A effective July 29, 2009 (C 090334 ZMK) as part of a larger effort to ensure contextual development of the area, by rezoning existing zoning districts to contextual residential and commercial districts.

3. Description of the Surrounding Area

The Project Area is located at the southern edge of the Greenpoint neighborhood, just north of McCarren Park, within Brooklyn Community District 1. Existing land uses within the surrounding area primarily consist of mixed commercial and residential buildings, vacant land, and park land. The manufacturing building located in the Project Area is also the Development Site and is proposed to be converted into a mixed-use commercial and residential building to be more in line with the surrounding neighborhood context.

There are contextual zoning districts mapped to the north and east of the Project Area including R6A, and R6B zoning districts that were mapped as part of the 2005 Greenpoint-Williamsburg Rezoning. To the south of the Project Area, is McCarren Park. The existing zoning districts in the surrounding area include:

M1-1

There is an M1-1 zoning district north of the Project Area along Nassau Avenue. The M1-1 district is primarily characterized by one- and two-story industrial buildings and open uses. M1-1 zoning districts permit light industrial uses, such as woodworking shops, repair shops, wholesale service, storage facilities, limited community facility uses, and commercial uses. New residential use is not permitted within the M1-1 district. The maximum floor area ratio ("FAR") for permitted manufacturing and commercial uses within the M1-1 district is 1.0 and 2.4 for permitted community facility uses. Off-street parking is required for manufacturing and commercial uses, and for most uses is calculated based on the amount of floor area. In M1-1 districts, the off-street parking requirement may be waived if fewer than fifteen spaces are required

M1-2/R6 (MX-8)

A M1-2/R6 (MX-8) zoning district encompassed the Project Area and extends along Lorimer Street between Driggs and Nassau Avenues and, cater-cornered, an additional blockfront along Nassau Avenue between Lorimer and Guernsey Streets. The MX-8 zoning district allows residential and non-residential uses (commercial, community facility, and light manufacturing). Specified light manufacturing and commercial uses, up to 2.0 FAR, are permitted as of right in M1-2/R6 (MX-8). MX districts with an R6 residential district permits residential uses to a maximum FAR of 3.6 on wide streets and 2.2 on narrow streets, community facility uses to an FAR of 4.8 and commercial and manufacturing uses to an FAR of 2.0. Height is limited to 60 feet at the street and 110 feet after setback. R6 district have a maximum community facility FAR of 4.8.

R6B

To the north and to the east of the Project Area is an R6B zoning district. The R6B zoning district permits residential uses with a maximum FAR of 2.0, a minimum streetwall height of 30 feet, a maximum streetwall height of 40 feet, and a maximum building height of 50 feet. R6B zoning districts permit community facility uses at 2.0 FAR. R6B districts require off-street parking for 50 percent of the dwelling units in a building, with an exemption from parking for income-restricted units within the Transit Zone. The Quality Housing program is mandatory for residential developments.

R6A/C2-4

There is an existing R6A zoning district to the west that is mapped generally along Manhattan Avenue. R6A districts are medium-density contextual districts that permit residential and community facility uses. R6A districts allow a maximum FAR of 3.0 for residential and community facility uses (up to 3.6 for residential uses with Inclusionary Housing in designated areas). Bulk regulations for R6A districts require a base height between 40 feet and 65 feet and have a maximum total height limit of 75 feet for Quality Housing buildings with qualifying ground floors (up to 85 feet with Inclusionary Housing in designated areas). R6A districts require off-street parking for 50 percent of the dwelling units in a building, with an exemption from parking for income-restricted units within the Transit Zone.

Public Transportation

The Project Area is located in the Transit Zone. There are numerous public transportation options for bus and subway service near the Project Area. The G Train stops at the intersection of Nassau Avenue and Manhattan Avenue which is one block away from the Development Site. Additionally, the B48 bus as well as the B43 bus stops directly across from the Development Site. There is a Citibike docking station on Driggs Avenue directly across the street from the development site. The development site is approximately two-thirds of a mile from the North Williamsburg ferry stop.

Other Zoning Designations

The Project Area is also split by the Greenpoint/Williamsburg Upland Inclusionary Housing Area. This district splits the Project Area at the current zoning district boundary.

4. Description of the Proposed Project Area

The Project Area is located in the Greenpoint neighborhood within Brooklyn Community District 1. The Project Area is bounded by Lorimer Street to the west, Driggs Avenue to the south and Manhattan Avenue to the east.

The Development Site

Block 2679, Lot 43 is an approximately 15,130 sq. ft. lot improved with three, three-story

buildings comprising a feather processing facility with a FAR of 2.59.

Non-Applicant Controlled Sites

Block 2679, Lot 32 is an approximately 2,310 sq. ft. lot improved with a four-story 2.86 FAR residential building with seven dwelling units and one ground floor commercial unit occupied by a barber shop.

Block 2679, Lot 34 is an approximately 2,259 sq. ft. lot with approved new building plans for a six-story residential building with ground floor commercial uses..

Block 2679, Lot 42 is an approximately 1,620 sq. ft. lot improved with a three-story 2.78 FAR building with four dwelling units and one ground floor retail space occupied by a restaurant.

5. Description of Proposed Development Site

The proposed Development Site is located at 840 Lorimer Street and consists of one tax lot (Block 2679, Lot 43). The Development Site is an irregularly shaped corner and interior lot with approximately 75 feet of frontage along Lorimer Street and approximately 133 feet of frontage along Driggs Avenue. Both Lorimer Street and Driggs Avenue are 60 feet wide with public parkland across both streets. The Development Site is currently improved with three, three-story buildings comprising a feather processing facility on Lot 43, which was built in the early 1930s. The floor area of the existing buildings is approximately 39,125 sq. ft. and 2.59 FAR.

6. Description of the Proposed Development

The Proposed Development is a new 10-story plus cellar residential, and commercial building with approximately 83,748 sq. ft. of floor area with an FAR of 5.54. The proposed building has a height of 115'-0" with a base height of 93'-0" feet and a 15'-0" setback at the tenth floor. It has approximately 83% lot coverage and no rear yard. The building would provide 28 off-street parking spaces accessory to the residential use in the cellar and ground floor level in the form of stackers. There would be one new curb cut on Driggs Avenue to access the required parking.

The proposed building contains approximately 59,659 sq. ft. of residential floor area with 74 dwelling units to be developed pursuant to Quality Housing regulations. The Applicant is proposing MIH Option 1 for the proposed development resulting in 19 permanently affordable units at or below 60 percent of the Area Median Income ("AMI") with 10 percent at or below 40 percent AMI.

The proposed building will also contain approximately 25,029 sq. ft. of commercial floor area with four retail spaces spread amongst three floors and a cellar floor commercial space.

7. Actions Necessary to Facilitate the Project

The actions necessary to facilitate the proposal are (1) a zoning map amendment to rezone the Project Area from M1-2/R6 (MX-8) and R6A/C2-4 zoning districts to a C4-5D commercial district and (2) a zoning text amendment to ZR Appendix F: Inclusionary Housing Designated Areas and Mandatory Inclusionary Housing Areas for Brooklyn Community District 1, to establish the Proposed Project Area as an MIH Designated Area. The Applicant proposes mapping MIH Options 1 and 2 within the Proposed Project Area to provide maximum flexibility for non-applicant-controlled sites. Option 1 requires that a minimum of 25% of the residential floor area be designated as affordable to households earning incomes with an average not exceeding 60% of the income index. Option 2 requires that a minimum of 30% of the residential floor area be designated as affordable to households earning incomes with an average not exceeding 80% of the income index. The Proposed Development will utilize Option 1.

a. Rationale for the C4-5D zoning district at the Proposed Project Area

This application seeks to rezone the Proposed Project Area from M1-2/R6 (MX-8) and R6A/C2-4 zoning districts to a C4-5D zoning district.

C4-5D districts in Brooklyn are mapped along regional commercial corridors well-served by public transportation, including along segments of Atlantic Avenue and Fulton Street. Other C4-5D districts are mapped along portions of East Fordham Road and Webster Avenue in the Bronx. The proposed C4-5D zoning district is a contextual commercial district designed to encourage the development of locally- and regionally-oriented commercial uses, including retail and office use, that do not generate high vehicular traffic. C4-5D districts allow a maximum commercial FAR of 4.2 and have a residential equivalent of an R7D district. 1 space of off-street accessory parking is required per 1,000 SF of commercial uses in PRC-B. Importantly, the C4-5D district permits commercial uses above the ground floor in buildings with residences (which would not be the case in a residential equivalent district with a commercial overlay). The area has historically had multi-story industrial buildings, including the existing on-site structures. The C4-5D district would permit continued job-generating commercial uses on more than just the first floor permitted in C1 or C2 districts in buildings with residences above.

In recent years, North Brooklyn, including Greenpoint, has emerged as a popular destination for housing, restaurants, shopping and other recreational uses. The neighborhood is undergoing significant demographic change. Between the 2006-2010 and 2014-2018 American Community Surveys (ACS), the population of the six census tracts that border McCarren Park (Census Tracts 569, 515, 517, 577, 519, 499) have increased from 10,342 to 15,375, an increase of 48.7 percent in less than a decade. This significant increase in population has correlated with a rapid increase in demand for housing in the neighborhood, which has resulted in an increase in housing prices. ACS data shows that median rent in these six Census Tracts increased approximately 68% during this period (from $1,567 to $2,683), compared to Brooklyn as a whole, which saw an increase of approximately 15% (from $1,175 to 1,374) during the same period.

There is a continuing need to provide new housing opportunities in Greenpoint to meet the rising demand for housing and growing population. The 2005 Williamsburg/Greenpoint rezoning resulted in significant housing production, including affordable housing options. A 2019 report from the Department of City Planning showed that the combined neighborhoods added more than 17,000 dwelling units since 2007, including 2,100 new income-restricted units and preserving an additional 1,070 income restricted units.[1]

The continued population growth and rising median rents in this area evidence a continuing need to increase the residential capacity of the neighborhood. At the same time, there is a need for increased commercial density to preserve current mix of job-generating commercial uses and residences. The 2009 contextual rezoning of the area recognized that certain areas, like those bordering McCarren Park and other open areas, could accommodate higher-density contextual districts, mapping the higher proposed densities “along wide streets that are major commercial or transportation corridors that are appropriate locations for a moderate increase in permitted density.”

The Project Area is in a transit-rich location falling within a three-minute walk of the Nassau Avenue station on the G train which is at Nassau and Manhattan Avenues. Manhattan Avenue, which constitutes the third street frontage of the Project Area and is less than 47 feet from the Development Site, is an important commercial thoroughfare with numerous restaurants and other ground floor commercial spaces. The Project Area is also well served by transit access to Manhattan, with the Lorimer Street station on the L train is just over one-half mile away directly down Lorimer Street from the Development Site, and the North Williamsburg ferry stop approximately three-quarters of a mile away.

The Project Area is bound by Lorimer Street to the west, Driggs Avenue to the south and Manhattan Avenue to the east. Lorimer Street and Driggs Avenue both face McCarren Park, a 35-acre open space with numerous recreation facilities, including baseball and football fields, basketball, bocce, handball and tennis courts, outdoor pools and playgrounds. Unlike nearby block

[1] Greenpoint Williamsburg Community Update, New York City Department of City Planning, https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/planning/download/pdf/planning-level/housing-economy/greenpoint-williamsburg_19.11.07.pdf

2291, which has an existing M1-2/R7A zoning district, the Project Area is the only area in the neighborhood with two frontages along McCarren Park. The Project Area is therefore particularly appropriate to accommodate moderately higher density and height than even those areas. McCarren Park presents an open space buffer that easily accommodates the additional density and height permitted under the R7D regulations.

Much like the existing mixed-use zoning in the area, the proposed C4-5D contextual zoning district allows for additional commercial development in addition to the residential density—consistent with the prevalent land uses in the area. In this way, the proposed actions would maintain and enhance the area's employment base consistent with the intent of the current mixed-use zoning.

b. Rationale for the Mandatory Inclusionary Housing Area Text Amendment

The proposed text amendment of ZR Appendix F is necessary to establish an MIH Area, which would require new developments to set aside 25-30 percent of the residential floor area for affordable housing. MIH Option 1 requires an affordable housing set aside of 25 percent of the residential floor area at an average of 60 percent of AMI with 10 percent at 40 percent AMI. MIH Option 2 requires an affordable housing set aside of 30 percent of the residential floor area at an average of 80 percent AMI. The Applicant proposes mapping both MIH Option 1 and Option 2 within the Project Area to provide maximum flexibility for non-Applicant controlled sites. The Applicant seeks Option 1 for the Development Site, resulting in 19 permanently affordable units. The proposed affordable housing set asides would ensure that development within the Project Area would address the critical need for new affordable housing in Brooklyn Community District 1. The proposed MIH Area would address the City's Housing New York: A Five-Borough, Ten-Year Plan goals by increasing affordable housing to help ensure the community remains economically diverse in the face of increasing pressure for market-rate development.

8. Conclusion

The Applicant proposes a zoning map amendment to map an C4-5D zoning district in the Project Area currently zoned as M1-2/R6 (MX-8) and R6A/C2-4 and a zoning text amendment to establish the Project Area as an MIH Area. The proposed actions would facilitate mixed-use development in the Greenpoint neighborhood within Brooklyn Community District 1. The proposed development would create 74 new dwelling units, with 19 permanently affordable units and new commercial space. The proposed rezoning would provide increased opportunities for housing development in a highly desirable neighborhood, including mandatory affordable housing, local retail at the Development Site. The MIH program ensures that new development within the Project Area would address the need for housing that serves low-income levels. These actions would be consistent with the City's goals of strengthening neighborhoods, expanding housing, including affordable housing, and employment in transit accessible areas while respecting the character of surrounding residential communities.